(c) No, Sir.

(d) Does not arise.

Prices of essential commodities

3249. PROF. ALKA BALRAM KSHATRIYA:
SHRIMATI SHOBHANA BHARTIA:

Will the Minister of CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION be pleased to state:

(a) whether the measures like export ban on wheat, pulses and sugar have done little to bring down food prices during the last one year;

(b) whether according to the Ministry, the prices have stabilized but prices had already climbed at an all-time high before it reached a plateau;

(c) if so, whether the price trend goes to show that the much-hyped export ban had little or no effect on domestic prices; and

(d) if so, what are the other steps Government propose to take to check the price of essential commodities in the country?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (SHRI KANTILAL BHURIA): (a) Prices of wheat have generally remained steady in the last few months. Retail prices of sugar, which were in the range of Rs. 20-25 per kg during June 2006 in the country have declined and are ruling in the range of Rs. 15-20 per kg. as on 30.4.2007. Retail prices of gram dal have registered a decline at 4 centres in the country after the Government banned export of pulses.

(b) to (d) It is true that prices of certain essential commodities such as wheat and pulses have registered increase during the year 2006 owing to inadequate supplies relative to demand and hardening of international prices. Following several measures taken by the Government to contain the rise in prices, while prices of certain commodities have declined, prices of some other commodities have stabilized although at a relatively higher level. The ban on export of some essential commodities has helped in augmenting the domestic availability of these commodities. However, the exact impact of the ban cannot be quantified. Government has recently decided to import 1 million tonnes of wheat in suitable tranches by July,

2007 to augment the buffer stocks of the Government. Government is maintaining a close watch on the prices situation of essential commodities and will take appropriate action as warranted.

Import of pulses

†3250. SHRI RAVI SHANKAR PRASAD:
DR. MURLI MANOHAR JOSHI:

Will the Minister of CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Government have taken a decision to import pulses in order to increase their supply in the country;

(b) if so, whether it is a fact that 3.4 million tonnes of pulses are estimated to be available for import in the international market, at present;

(c) if not, the facts in this regard;

(d) whether it is also a fact that prices of pulses in international market have already increased due to our country's demand for the import of 1.5 million tonnes of pulses; and

(e) if so, the facts in this regard and whether there is no possibility of decline in the prices of pulses in the country from their import due to increase in their prices in international market?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (SHRI KANTILAL BHURIA): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) No, Sir.

(c) As estimated by trade, the global exportable surplus of pulses is estimated at about 3.9 million tonnes.

(d) and (e) Prices of pulses in the international market have generally registered a rising trend in the last one year. However, in the last three months, international prices of urad have registered a decline. Decline in the domestic prices of pulses is dependent upon a number of factors such as domestic production, quantity of pulses imported, demand for pulses and international prices scenario.

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.